

Opinion

TREC is coming along

To all of you who have asked and wondered if I'm still doing this column, yes, yes. I've been a bit harried of late helping to get the TREC school off the ground that I've missed several issues due to time restrictions, but am now back and at it again.

Besides, can spring be very far away? There is always so much happening in the spring and the groundhog did see his shadow, so that always encourages me to get more done.

For those of you who are wondering how the TREC undertaking is coming along here's an update.

The program is well underway and disabled children are now into their second month of their program here on the Guelph Line. TREC now owns three horses (all donated) and have six on loan.

Jaci Thomas is the teacher and stable manager and doing a wonderful job. We have some great volunteers (still in desperate need of many more as it takes three persons for each student). We especially need persons to do typing, so if there's anyone out there who could give a few hours a week please call me 854-0323.

As the end of this month draws nigh, we get nervous again wondering if we'll be able to meet the rent, hydro, telephone, etc., but we mustn't give up. One look at these children's faces as they arrive for their weekly lessons practically orders you to press on. Please help if you can make a donation (none too small).

TREC is also offering a start facility for those who wish to begin riding but are not disabled. Also boarding facilities for your horse. Come out some early Sunday afternoon and see what these wonderful volunteers are doing.

Did You Know??? In years to come baking soda may be just as popular in the barn as it is in the kitchen. Added to the horse's feed (at 1 or 2 per cent levels) may address the tying-up syndrome a lot of horses are plagued with, and it seems to be well accepted by them.

It appears to help counteract the damage which can result from rapid acid production in

Horse Country

with VIRGINIA TAYLOR

the intestines and the muscles. Intense exercise produces a buildup of lactic acid. In one study on humans, athletes seemed to use the supplies of energy in their muscles more efficiently, and cleared the lactic acid more promptly, and to generally tolerate greater amounts of the acid.

Foals and younger horses suffer more respiratory problems from the buildup of ammonia in their stalls because (a) they are closer to the ground and they'd be inhaling a stronger concentration and (b) their lung size is of course smaller.

News News News: Starting with this week's column I will do a news section each week as so many of you have asked me to do to keep you up to date on what's new in the horse world.

Bobbie Reber has joined Mike Grinyer in a merger which has the whole horse world gabbing. A very exciting event for this area. Mike is the acknowledged Jumper King of our area and Bobbie Reber has been called the "Goddess" of children's teachers, although she also has a contingent of amateur riders as well.

The new name of this Hunter-Jumper training facility is Round The Bend located still at Mike's place on No. 20 Sideroad, just north of Campbellville. We will have an in-depth story on this merger very soon. Both Mike and Bobbie are in Florida doing the Sun-Shine circuit at the moment. It's nice for Nassagaweya and Milton to be so well represented at this, one of the United States most prestigious show circuits.



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Building a snow fort

Snow, glorious snow! The children are always ecstatic over the first snowfall of the season. It's especially exciting the first time a toddler becomes aware of the snow and points to it in fascination.

It's certainly an instant cure for the autumn doldrums when "there's nothing to do outside" (according to our oldest).

The children race downstairs to the crawspace in search of boots to fit feet which have been growing non-stop since the previous winter. Then they race upstairs to raid the box of snowsuits, hats and mitts.

I remember one first snowfall three years ago. Our oldest, then six, spent the morning rolling the snow into large balls for a snowman. It was just right for packing. He stationed the largest on the front lawn, then balanced two smaller balls on top. He searched the garden for small stones for eyes, nose and mouth. He was so proud of his accomplishment which he had carried out single-handedly.

Later that day, his friend came over to play with him. And so did the boy's older brother. To our son's horror, the two boys set about kicking at his snowman until it lay in a snowy mess. In a matter of seconds, they had destroyed what had taken him so long to build.

A couple of weeks ago, our son spent one afternoon carving a fort out of the snowbank left on our front lawn by the snowplow. With a small shovel and 100 per cent concentration, he hewed a hole and carefully smoothed the walls of his structure.

Two neighbourhood boys, who had been playing together on the other side of the street, came over to our side, sticks in hands. Unexpectedly, they started puncturing the walls of the fort.

As a family, we constantly remind one another to treat others the way we want to be treated, so it's not part of our son's nature to fight back under these circumstances. Instead, he ran into the house, tears welling up in eyes — frustrated, hurt and angry. This wasn't the first time this winter that kids had ruined his fort.

More recently, we had such a snowfall that there was a high snowbank for every house at

On the Home Front

with ESTHER CALDWELL

the end of our court. A number of kids headed for one particularly solid bank and dug out a tunnel. All morning children came and went.

At one point, there were three girls playing in it. Along came two teenagers. After checking out several snowbanks, purposely kicking at any visible signs of some child's efforts, they spotted the girls playing in the tunnel, so over they went.

I was outside at this point clearing our driveway. I saw the girls make a quick exit from the tunnel and head for home. I shouted to the boys to let the youngsters play, then I walked over to them.

"The snow doesn't belong to anybody," one boy said.

He was right, but did that allow him to trample on the children's tunnel which they were enjoying so much?

I stood my ground, so the boys headed for the next bank.

"This one's ours!" the same boy announce defiantly.

As a parting gesture, they attacked the snowbank in front of our house. Our son looked at me with a defeated expression. He had had plans for that pile of snow.

And so it goes, winter after winter. The same game is played out. A game neither our son nor I understand.

Sadness and despair wash over me every time our son — our family — experiences such animosity, or at the least, thoughtlessness, originating from young people. What are they thinking as they destroy another child's happiness?

Are we supposed to shrug our shoulders resignedly and say: "Oh well, kids will be kids?"

A brief, mysterious encounter

A should have known, it was bound to happen sooner or later. But when it did, I was taken completely by surprise.

While back, during a cold snap, "Charlie" and I were taking our daily walk across the frozen Mill Pond. It was a sun-filled morning and a fresh fall of snow creaked beneath my feet.

A handful of mothers were watching as bundled-up, pre-school tots busily attempted to stay erect on their first pair of skates. Some distance away, a tractor-with-blade was slowly cleaning the ice, in anticipation of the arrival of many more skaters later in the day.

At a leisurely pace, Charlie and I crossed the pond and soon reached a grove of trees on the far side. I looked around and found an old, fallen log. Brushing it off, with a gloved hand, I sat down. Charlie took his place at my feet.

From this quiet spot the traffic sounds from Martin Street seemed far away and it wasn't too difficult for me to imagine sitting up in the woods that stretched behind my former home on Mount Nemo.

I was deeply engrossed in these thoughts when I heard a familiar cackle behind me: "Well Scribbler, so how are you enjoying town life?"

"Oh, no," I whispered, turning around with such speed I almost fell off the log, "the Guru of Mount Nemo! What the hell are you doing here?"

The old man stood before me trying to conceal a smile that was crinkling his leathery, lined face. Straggly, grey hair stuck out like a halo from under his parka. His boney hands were buried deep in his pockets. "You won't believe this, Scribbler, but I've missed you," he said, drawing closer.

"You're right about that," I replied, "I don't. What's the matter, Guru, can't you intimidate the guy who bought my house? Haven't you iced-up his driveway yet?"

"I've tried to meet him, when he's been up in the woods, but he can't see me," said the old



Here to There

with DON BYERS

man with obvious disappointment. "He just can't see me."

I brushed off the log beside me. "Come on, sit down."

As he did, Charlie stood up and poked his cold, black nose between the Guru's knees, inviting the old man's scrawny hands to scratch his shaggy head.

"It's just not the same, Scribbler, just not the same."

"Well, at least you don't have me putting you down all the time because of your phony predictions!" I replied. "Surely that should comfort you."

"It doesn't really, I used to get my own back, if you remember," he said and lapsed into reflective silence.

"Say, by the way, how did you know I've moved into Milton?" I asked.

"I saw your new column. It made me remember the good old days when you used to bash me, every so often, in "Between the Willows". Yes, those were the times."

"Well, Guru, take heart. I'm sure the new guy will be able to see you eventually."

"Aren't you forgetting something Scribbler?" he asked, a sly smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

"What's that?"

"I'm a figment of your imagination. I don't exist anywhere else," he said with a deep sigh.

"Don't be too sure of that," I replied. "Don't be too sure."

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